

Encouraging Words for Challenging Times  
**The Model to Follow**  
Philippians 2:1-18

**Encouragement Personified**

**2:1-11**

The Greek term translated *form* indicates a correspondence with reality. Thus the meaning of this phrase is that Christ was truly God.

*The NET Bible*

The word translated **nature** (*morphē*) in verses 6 and 7 is a crucial term in this passage. This word (trans. "form" in the kjv and nasb) stresses the inner essence or reality of that with which it is associated (cf. Mark 16:12). Christ Jesus, Paul said, is of the very essence (*morphē*) of God, and in His incarnation He embraced perfect humanity. His complete and absolute deity is here carefully stressed by the apostle. The Savior's claim to deity infuriated the Jewish leaders (John 5:18) and caused them to accuse Him of blasphemy (John 10:33).  
trans. translation, translator, translated

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

These statements indicate that Christ became a man, a true human being. The words "made Himself nothing" are, literally, "He emptied Himself." "Emptied," from the Greek *kenoō*, points to the divesting of His self-interests, but not of His deity. "The very nature of a servant" certainly points to His lowly and humble position, His willingness to obey the Father, and serve others. He became a man, a true human being. "Likeness" suggests similarity but difference. Though His humanity was genuine, He was different from all other humans in that He was sinless (Heb. 4:15).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

**Encouragement's Application**

**2:12-18**

The passage resumes the thought of 1:27 with the concern of whether Paul might be present or absent. More importantly, however, Paul identified and applied what he considered the central thrust of Jesus' attitude, obedience (2:8). For Paul, obedience was also a primary responsibility of the church and expressed an essential ingredient in Christian living. These verses have three movements to them, all of which extend the central idea of obedience. First, the Philippians were to devote themselves to practical Christianity (2:12-13) by working out their salvation. Then, they were to be characterized by positive steadfastness (2:14-16), never succumbing to complaining or grumbling. Finally, they were to participate in Paul's personal joy in ministry (2:17-18), not only rejoicing with him but also sharing his outlook.

*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*

### Challenge to Apply

12-13

It is commonly understood that this exhortation relates to the personal salvation of the saints at Philippi. They were told to "work out," to put into practice in their daily living, what God had worked in them by His Spirit. They were not told to work *for* their salvation but to work *out* the salvation God had already given them. In view of the apparent problems of disunity and pride among those believers this interpretation seems correct. Some were not doing their work selflessly and with the interests of others ahead of their own (cf. 2:3-4).

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

### Reason to Apply

14-18

**Patterning our life after Christ  
provides the encouragement we need for this life.**

- Q1. What keeps us from practicing humility?
  
- Q2. What do we gain from patterning our life after Christ?